



MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

PLANNING AND LAND USE DEPARTMENT

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May 7, 2001

Patrick Poland, Director
Alaska Department of Community &
Economic Development
Division of Community and Business Development
550 W. 7th Avenue, Suite 1770
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-3510

RE: Preliminary Report to the Local Boundary Commission Regarding the Amended Petition to Incorporate the Home Rule City of Talkeetna

Dear Mr. Poland:

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough has reviewed and commented extensively on the Talkeetna Incorporation Petition. Most recently, we responded to the amended petition with comments on July 21, 2000. The issues identified by the Borough in July 2000 are still of concern.

Our primary concerns are identified below.

- The minimal budget proposed by the petitioners.
- The proposed boundaries will split road service areas
- The proposed provision of solid waste services will be cost prohibitive.
- The amended petition proposes to take on Animal Control, without showing funding in the proposed city budget.

The Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) has not adequately addressed the concerns raised by the Borough in the report. Our comments from July 2001 are attached and serve as our response to the Preliminary Report to the Local Boundary Commission regarding the Amended Petition to Incorporate the Home Rule City of Talkeetna. In addition, we submit the following comments on the conclusions of the Preliminary Report.

- **Article X, Sections 1 and 5**
Road Service Areas (RSAs) will be split. MSB agrees with the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) in that the total number of service districts will be reduced. However, the residents of the affected RSAs will be negatively impacted.
- **3AAC 110.040(a)(1)**
Issues relating to Freedom Hills will need to be addressed should the city incorporate. Incorporation should be contingent upon the resolution of those issues.
- **3AAC 110.040(a)(3)**
Issues regarding the proposed splitting of RSAs need to be addressed before the proposed incorporation of the City of Talkeetna.
- **AS 29.05.011(a)(2)**
MSB agrees with DCED's conclusion in that the proposed boundaries are generally the

same as the community council boundaries. MSB 2.76.040 defines natural communities as areas within the borough that have or are achieving district identity by reason of geography, history, population, transportation, fire protection, and other factors. However, services provided to area residents will be impacted by the proposed splitting of RSAs.

- **AS 29.05.011(a)(3); 3 AAC 110.020(a)(I)-(II)**
DCED correctly notes there are many unresolved questions regarding the petitioner's proposed budget and how the proposed services will be funded. The Borough does not want to see the City of Talkeetna incorporate only to struggle, or worse fail, because they set unrealistic expectations in their budget. For example, the petitioners show a budget of \$80,000 to operate the library. MSB Department of Community Development states that it currently costs the borough \$109,000 to operate the Talkeetna library using a large volunteer workforce.
- **3 AAC 110.010(a)(1)**
MSB disagrees with DCED's conclusion that the fracturing of RSAs is an insufficient basis for denying the petition. The fracturing of RSAs will negatively impact the area's residents, and must be addressed before action on the petition.
- **3 AAC 110.010(a)(2)**
MSB agrees with DCED. Animal Control must be more thoroughly addressed by the petitioners. If it is not addressed, there may be a public safety problem.
- **AS 29.05.021(b); 3 AAC 110.010**
MSB disagrees with the conclusions of DCED. The table on page 61 lists twenty-six services provided by the Borough. Eight of these services are borough areawide services and must remain so. One Borough service area is Fire Service, which the petitioners propose to leave with the Borough. Six services are to be assumed by the proposed city. Ten listed services have been identified in DCED's table as unclear or undetermined by the petitioners. While the revised petition has clarified several issues relating to services, there are still many issues that need to be addressed.

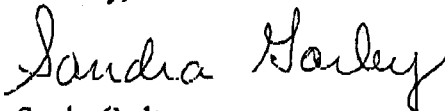
MSB respectfully notes the following corrections to the Report:

- Page 30, paragraph 2 incorrectly identifies comments regarding RSA #19 as being made by the Director of Community Development, Ron Swanson. The comments were made by the Jim Swing, Director of Public Works.
- Page 30, paragraph 6 incorrectly identifies MSB Director of Public Works, Jim Swing, as the Director of Community Development.

The Borough believes these issues must be addressed before the community of Talkeetna is ready to take on the responsibility of providing city governance to its citizens.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Please contact Beth McKibben, Planner II, at 745-9854, should you have any questions regarding our comments.

Sincerely,



Sandra Garley
Director of Planning